

# MEMO

**DATE:** August 17, 2006

**TO:** Transportation and Communications Committee

**FROM:** Steve Wylie, Assistant Executive Officer, Southern California Regional Rail Authority

**SUBJECT:** Southern California Regional Rail Authority's Sealed Corridor Program

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**SUMMARY:** Following the January 2005 derailment in Glendale involving two Metrolink trains and a Union Pacific train, caused by an individual who intentionally parked his vehicle across the railroad tracks, the Southern California Regional Rail Authority has embarked on a federally funded study to create a Sealed Corridor along Metrolink's Antelope Valley and Ventura County Lines. SCRRA staff will provide an overview of this initiative, which is designed to establish a comprehensive program to enhance grade crossing and rail corridor safety and security.

## BACKGROUND

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) is a Joint Powers Authority, created by the five County Transportation Commissions in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties. SCRRA operates the Metrolink commuter rail service, and provides train dispatching and railroad maintenance, rehabilitation and construction services on rail corridors owned by its member agencies. As such, SCRRA is responsible for the operation and maintenance of numerous grade crossings within its service territory. All public highway rail grade crossings comply with relevant standards of the California Public Utilities Commission and the Federal Railroad Administration.

Since its inception over a decade ago, SCRRA and its member agencies have invested over \$70 million in grade crossing and related rail corridor safety improvements. Within that same period, rail service (both passenger and freight) has grown significantly, as has vehicular traffic within the region. The frequency of grade crossing and other accidents adjusted by the growth in rail service continues to fall. Nevertheless, as the incident in Glendale revealed, every accident is a tragedy, and there are opportunities for enhancement of grade crossing and rail corridor safety throughout the region.

In the wake of the Glendale incident in January 2005, SCRRA has launched its Sealed Corridor Initiative. Funded in part by a grant from the Federal Railroad Administration, the Sealed Corridor program will bring policy-level and technical stakeholders together to create strategies for rail corridor safety investments within four sub-corridors of Metrolink's Antelope Valley and Ventura County Lines. Phase 1 of the Sealed Corridor Initiative encompasses 65 miles of railroad between Los Angeles Union Station and San Fernando/Sylmar on the Antelope Valley Line, and through Moorpark on the Ventura County Line. SCRRA has begun its outreach efforts, including approximately 50 individual briefings to municipal, county, state and federal legislative, and business leaders within the Phase 1 area. The Phase 1 effort will entail the development of conceptual improvement and funding plans within each corridor. Based upon funding availability, shelf-ready concept plans will move forward to final design and construction.

The Sealed Corridor approach will begin in the San Fernando Valley/Ventura County area described above. Similar methodologies will be undertaken throughout the Metrolink service area as well.

# Metrolink's Sealed Corridor Project

SCAG Transportation and  
Communications Committee  
September 14, 2006

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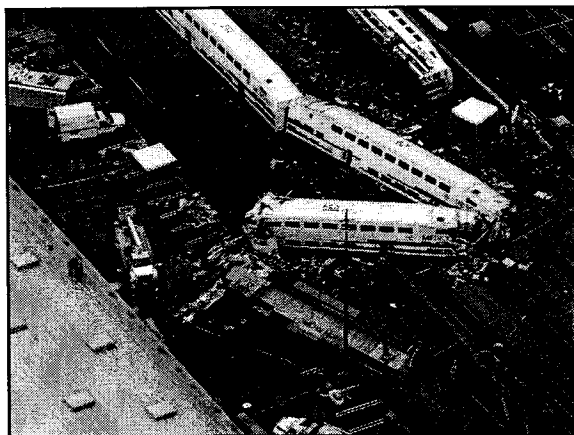
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## Why a Sealed Corridor Project?

- January 26, 2005 Glendale incident
  - Mitigation – Modifying equipment with Crash Energy Management technologies
  - Avoidance – Sealed Corridor is the primary strategy

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## What is a Sealed Corridor?

A comprehensive strategy to enhance the safety of trains, passengers, motorists, pedestrians, and neighboring land uses within and along a railroad corridor, using appropriate safety measures to systematically reduce the opportunity for accidents at grade crossings or elsewhere within the corridor.

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## Metrolink's \$70 Million Investment in Safety Improvements Since 1992

- Upgraded railroad signal system and enhanced control circuits
- Raised median islands
- Improved signage and striping
- Right of way fencing
- Improved traffic engineering and roadway geometry
- Closure of 7 public and 22 private crossings
- Construction of 12 grade separations
- Ongoing rail safety public education programs

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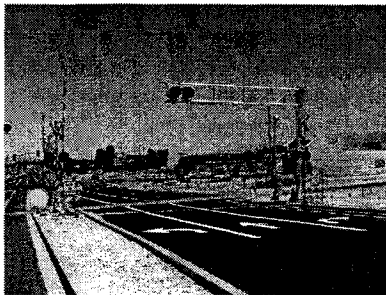
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## Avenue S, Palmdale



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### Metrolink's Challenges

- Geographic scale/multiple ownership
  - 787 grade crossings of all types in the Metrolink system
  - 443 at-grade crossings in the Metrolink system
- Intensity of corridor usage
  - Over 250 daily Metrolink, Amtrak and freight trains operate daily
- Competing priorities for funding

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### Initial Corridors

- Antelope Valley Line
  - Sun Valley to Sylmar/San Fernando
- Ventura County Line
  - Union Station through Moorpark
- 55 public highway-rail grade crossings
  - 4 private and 4 pedestrian-only crossings

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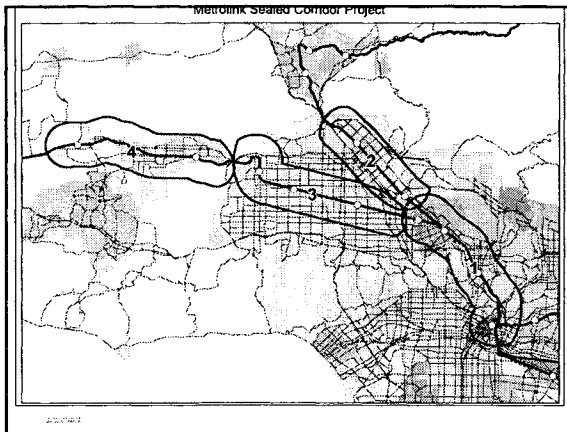
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## Sealed Corridor Safety Enhancements

- Four-quadrant gates
- Median separators or raised islands
- Signal improvements
- New signs and pavement markings
- Crossing signal "health monitoring" systems
- Locked gates and fencing
- Crossing geometry improvements
- Grade separation or closing of crossings
- Advanced technology assessment

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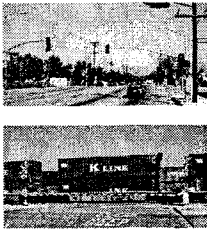
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## Four Quadrant Gates, Pomona



- Entrance and exit gates
- Vehicle presence detectors
- Currently being deployed as part of Alameda Corridor East

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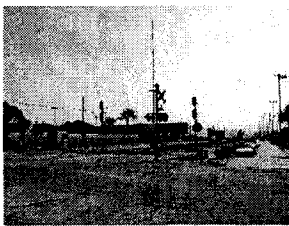
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## Chevy Chase Drive, Glendale



- Quad gates due to adjacent street/driveway
- Signage improvements,
- Improve existing asphalt paving
- Right of way security

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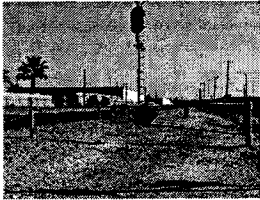
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## Right of Way Security Swing Gates



- Prefabricated gates prevent access to right of way
- To be installed at all crossings where appropriate

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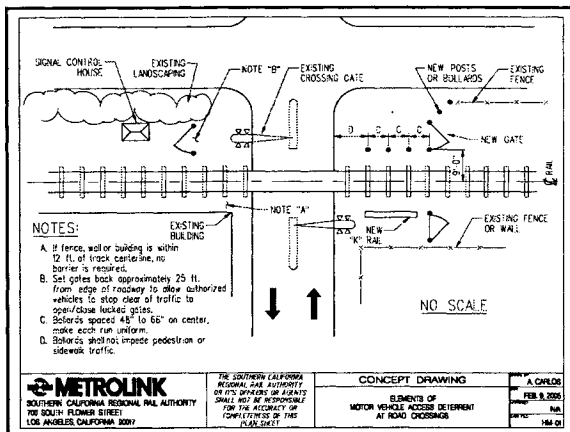
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## Broadway/Brazil Glendale/Los Angeles



- Narrow crossing
- Significant truck traffic with U turns
- Open right of way

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### Broadway/Brazil Glendale/Los Angeles



- Wednesday, April 19, 2006
- The result of a long truck in a narrow crossing

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### Doran St. Glendale/Los Angeles



- Narrow hump crossing
- Industrial access only; significant truck traffic
- SR-134 and I-5 access
- Opportunities for street improvement and traffic re-routing

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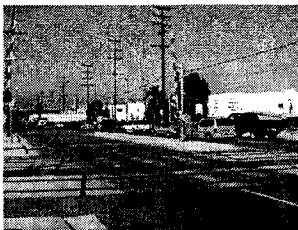
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### Mason Avenue, Chatsworth



- New crossing with medians, good pavement, no humps
- Traffic queuing due to truck access

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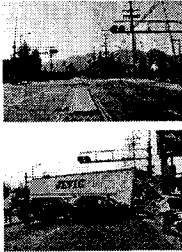
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### Lassen Avenue, Chatsworth



- The consequences of commercial driveways adjacent to railroad crossings

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### Los Angeles Ave., Moorpark



- Narrow, hump crossing
- Highly skewed angle
- Open right of way
- Improve crossing geometry

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### Astoria Street, Sylmar



- Zig-zag pedestrian crossing

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### Project Approach

- Outreach to corridor cities, member agencies and other stakeholders
  - Build awareness and support for comprehensive corridor safety improvements
  - Policy and technical levels
- Engineering support for concept development, final design, and construction bid support
- High level consensus on improvements
- Create funding strategies
- Final design and construction

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### Potential Funding Sources

- Federal
  - Section 130 Crossing improvement program
  - Section 1010/1103 (C) High speed rail hazard elimination
  - Line item appropriations/earmarks
- State
  - Public Transportation Account
  - Section 190 grade separation program
  - Potential state transportation bond
- Local
  - Calls for projects
  - Development mitigation
  - Tax increments in redevelopment project areas

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### Associated Funding To Date

- \$250,000 FRA Study Grant – August 2005
- \$2,000,000 STP earmark – Senator Feinstein
- \$500,000 High Speed Rail earmark – Congressman Berman
- \$500,000 STP earmark – Congressman Schiff
- \$925,000 – Van Nuys Blvd., Los Angeles
- \$327,000+ - SCRRRA Homeland Security Grant
- \$1,000,000+ – controlled by City of Glendale
- \$1,200,000 – controlled by City of Burbank
- \$2,000,000 Section 130 programmed for 3 crossings

**TOTAL: OVER \$9,000,000**

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